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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

*Recent Communist Logistical and Manpower
Developments in Indochina*

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8 May 1973

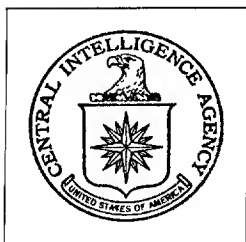
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8 May 1973



Recent Communist Logistical and Manpower Developments in Indochina

Major Communist logistical activity continues throughout most of Indochina. The North Vietnamese are apparently making one final push to move supplies before the onset of the rainy season.

- The heavy movement of supplies by truck through southern North Vietnam is being accompanied by an increasing reliance on waterborne resupply, particularly between Dong Hoi, North Vietnam, and Quang Tri in South Vietnam.
- Large deliveries from Laos to South Vietnam are continuing: one major logistical unit reported moving 6,000 tons of supplies into the A Shau Valley region recently.
- A transportation campaign designed to move about 5,600 tons of supplies to the B-3 Front before 20 May has been disclosed.

On the manpower side, the rate of infiltration remained at a low level, but two significant force redeployments were detected:

- Another armor regiment has been identified in Quang Tri Province.
- In southern South Vietnam, the first post-cease-fire deployment of a major Communist unit -- from MR 3 to the Delta -- has been confirmed.

Note: Comments and queries regarding the publication are welcomed. They may be directed to [redacted] the Office of Economic Research, [redacted]

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DISCUSSION

Recent Logistical Developments

North Vietnam

1. Heavy logistic activity continues in the North Vietnam Panhandle. Elements of Binh Tram 26, located around Dong Hoi, are engaged in moving supplies (including ordnance) southward by both truck and watercraft. Between 28 April and 2 May, 276 trucks were reported moving through a checkpoint south of Dong Hoi. Watercraft operating out of the Dong Hoi area are apparently ranging as far south as northern MR 1 to the coastal and inland waterways in Quang Tri Province. On 27 April, Binh Tram 26 indicated that boats which had recently transported cargo south from Dong Hoi were short of fuel in the Quang Tri area and were requesting assistance.

Southern Laos and Cambodia

2. Logistical activity remains high in the Laos Panhandle amid indications that Communist logistical entities there are engaged in a new transportation campaign.

3. Photography of the roads through the passes showed them still sustaining substantial levels of traffic. In addition, the major routes through the central Panhandle were supporting very heavy levels of vehicle activity. More than 800 vehicles were observed on Route 99 [redacted]

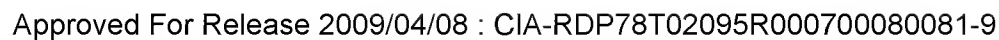
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[redacted] including 280 between Muong Nong and Ban Bac on one day.

4. A new transportation resupply campaign was kicked off on 5 May in the central Panhandle. It was described in COMINT as a "top priority" transportation effort, and supplies are to be moved deep into southern Laos. Farther South, in the tri-border area of Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam, a "general transportation offensive" has evidently been in progress since late April. According to a 30 April intercept, at least 1,100 tons of cargo had already been transported into the central highlands, and the goal of the offensive was to ship another 4,500 tons before 20 May. Although the composition of the goods being shipped was not specified, they probably comprise primarily military equipment and ordnance. The intercept stated that the requirements of the transportation offensive were hindering the supply of foodstuffs to subordinate units. Supplies have been moving toward the B-3 Front at a fast rate throughout much of the current dry season, and delivery of this 5,600 tons will further improve the Communists' logistical position there. During the past year, average daily requirements for weapons, equipment, and ammunition have not exceeded 10 tons in MR 2.

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5. Numerous other intercepts from the tri-border region reflected the high level of activity accompanying the new offensive. On 30 April, Group 470, which oversees activity in the tri-border/northeastern Cambodia area, reported that it was assembling vehicles for the offensive. The next day an element of Group 470 referred to "large vehicle convoys" which it had received, and further exhorted its subordinates to organize their activity well because the time left for shipping supplies to the B-3 Front was limited. This concern almost certainly reflects Communist expectation of a slowdown in activity as a result of the approaching rainy season.

6. Heavy North Vietnamese logistic activity continues in eastern Cambodia. Despite heavy bombing, US pilots reported that the major supply routes there are in excellent condition. All road cuts have been quickly repaired, and there are fresh signs of sustained heavy traffic. Mechanized repair equipment and road crews building bridges and culverts were seen along most routes. On Route 19 near the South Vietnam border, bulldozers are being used to dig underground revetments for trucks and supplies, which are quickly camouflaged upon completion.

7. Some details on military shipments between southern Laos and the Stung Treng logistic complex were noted [] this week. One such report described the ferrying of southbound truckloads of weapons and supplies across the Stung Treng ferry station on Route 13 during the evening of 11 April. [] the cargo carried by the vehicles [] were part of a shipment comprising 200 trucks which "came down the Ho Chi Minh Trail in March." Use of the Mekong supply corridor was noted [] a group of 13 North Vietnamese motorboats transporting rice up the river to a location near the Laos/Cambodia border. []

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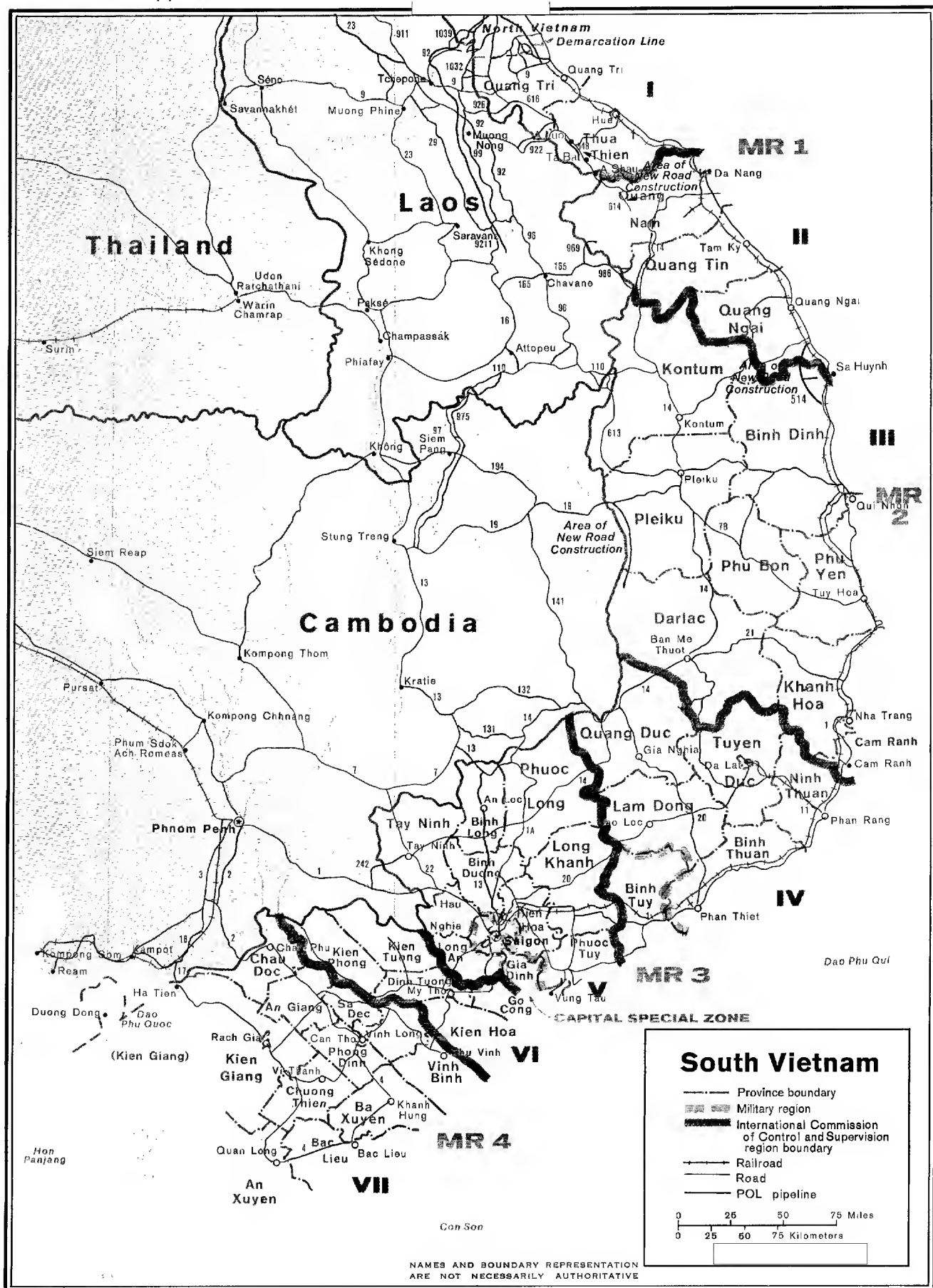
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[] some 3,000 tons of rice and about 30 tons of diesel fuel were moved by the Communists from Kratie north toward Stung Treng between 28 March and 10 April.

South Vietnam

8. Aerial photography and COMINT reflect the continuing heavy Communist resupply effort into and within northern South Vietnam. Communist truck activity in northern Quang Tri Province was at an extremely high level during the week. More than 450 vehicles were observed in [] photography, including nearly 300 along Routes 9 and 608 and in large truck parks outside of Khe Sanh. Farther south, an element of Binh Tram 42, which has the responsibility of moving supplies into the A Shau Valley region reported on 30 April that it was receiving 30 cargo vehicles each day. One summary report covering an unspecified period



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[redacted]

indicated that the binh tram had handled more than 6,000 tons of supplies, most of which was received, then dispatched to destinations in the South Vietnam/Laos border area. Most of the cargo appeared to be rice and foodstuffs, but included some ammunition and other ordnance items.

9. The existence of large stockpiles in the Laos/South Vietnam border area was again disclosed in COMINT, when on 2 May it was reported that more than 7,800 tons of cargo -- including at least 7,400 tons of ordnance -- were remaining in storage in western Quang Tri Province.

10. In eastern Quang Tri, four newly constructed storage facilities have been identified in recent photography near Dong Ha. One is next to a landing slip on the Cua Viet River, where offloaded supplies and about 70 small watercraft were observed. According to a rallier, the Communists are using this site to transship supplies infiltrated down the coast from North Vietnam -- a delivery pattern confirmed in COMINT. The facility has three docks where food and munitions are offloaded from vessels onto trucks and shipped into Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces.

11. In southern MR 1, the Communists are continuing to rebuild Route 14 in western Quang Nam and Quang Tin Provinces. A rallier has recently confirmed indications from photography that the Communists intend to link Route 14 with 614 leading south from the A Shau Valley, and other reports indicate that the Communists are continuing to improve and expand their roads into the coastal lowlands.

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12. In MR 2, [redacted] during April the Communists moved about 40 truckloads of men and supplies and at least eight tanks and two 130-mm field guns over trails leading into northern Kontum Province from Laos. Reportedly, a large part of the troops and equipment was delivered to a new staging area the Communists are developing some 20 miles northwest of Kontum City.

13. Farther south, in MR 3, [redacted] by mid-April the Communists had established a large new logistic complex several miles northeast of Xa Mat between Route 246 and the Tay Ninh Province-Cambodia border. The complex [redacted] includes large storage areas for rice and ammunition, repair facilities for weapons and motor vehicles, a communications center, and several support structures. As of mid-April, some 80 tons of ammunition, mostly for small arms and mortars and more than 100 tons of rice [redacted] were stored there, and 3,500 weapons -- most of them Soviet-made -- were on hand in an arms repair shop manned by North Vietnamese gunsmiths. The vehicle repair section

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is reportedly well equipped with tools and machinery. []
 [] the entire facility is camouflaged against air observation, and security forces are equipped with antiaircraft guns.

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Recent Manpower Developments

Personnel Infiltration

14. Two new special-purpose infiltration groups with about 275 men were noted moving southward through North Vietnam during the past week. Farther south in the system, four new special-purpose groups with an estimated aggregate strength of almost 100 persons were noted in southern Laos and Cambodia. One of these groups, which was located on 3 May in the tri-border area, comprises four North Vietnamese and five Chinese "friends" and may be destined for northern Cambodia. The designator of this group also suggests that its personnel are relatively high-ranking civilians.

15. As a result of these detections, our estimate of infiltration starts from North Vietnam since 28 January now is more than 16,000 persons. Except for stragglers from regular and special-purpose groups, however, the infiltration system has been virtually cleared of southbound personnel. Our estimate of infiltration starts since 1 September 1972 and since 1 January 1973 are shown in Tables 1 and 2, respectively.

Table 1

Infiltration Starts, by Season

Destination	1 Sep 71 - 6 May 72	1 Sep 72 - 6 May 73
Total	115,000	86,500
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	17,000	26,000
MR 5	16,000	9,000
B-3 Front	30,000	14,000
COSVN	38,000	26,500
Southern Laos/MR 559	14,000	11,000

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Table 2
Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline
Since 1 January 1973

	Total ¹	Special-Purpose ²
1-7 Jan	4,700	400
8-14	3,700	350
15-21	6,100	500
22-28	4,000	150
29-4 Feb	6,300	400
5-11	3,100	250
12-18	2,000	850
19-25	500	500
26-4 Mar	750	750
5-11	1,300	300
12-18	550	550
19-25	650	650
26-1 Apr	300	300
2-8	175	175
9-15	75	75
16-22	125	125
23-29	0	0
30-6 May	275	275

1. Including gap-filled groups, except Groups 7001 through 7009. Assuming that these groups departed between 1 January and 10 March, some 4,500 combat troops would be spread over the departures estimated for those weeks.

2. Including those groups which were initially detected without a specific strength but which have been assigned an average strength of 35.

Unit Redeployments in South Vietnam

16. Recently available COMINT indicates that the 201st NVA Armor Regiment is now operating in Quang Tri Province. A 25 April intercept revealed that the regimental headquarters was located in the central DMZ area, while a 20 April intercept indicated that additional elements are operating west of Quang Tri City. The 201st Regiment was last noted in COMINT moving southward in the Vinh area of North Vietnam in November 1972. Although it is unclear when the regiment began arriving in South Vietnam, recent evidence suggests that at least some elements arrived after 28 January. With the confirmation of the 201st Regiment in Quang Tri Province, the current estimate of the number of tanks sent south by Hanoi since late October is 580, a total greater than the number estimated to have been committed to South Vietnam for the Communist 1972 offensive.

Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

South Vietnam

Regular Combat Forces

VC/NVA¹RVNAF²

163,000

287,000

VC/NVA

RVNAF

80,000

85,000

325th

VNMC

324B

Airborne

320B

1st

312th

2nd

304th

3rd

711th

Regional

2nd

Forces

MR 2

VC/NVA

RVNAF

29,000

57,000

320th

23rd

10th

22nd

3rd

Regional

Forces

MR 3

VC/NVA

RVNAF

27,000

67,000

429th Sapper
Command

25th

9th

18th

7th

5th

Regional

Forces

MR 4

VC/NVA

RVNAF

27,000

78,000

5th

21st

1st

9th

7th

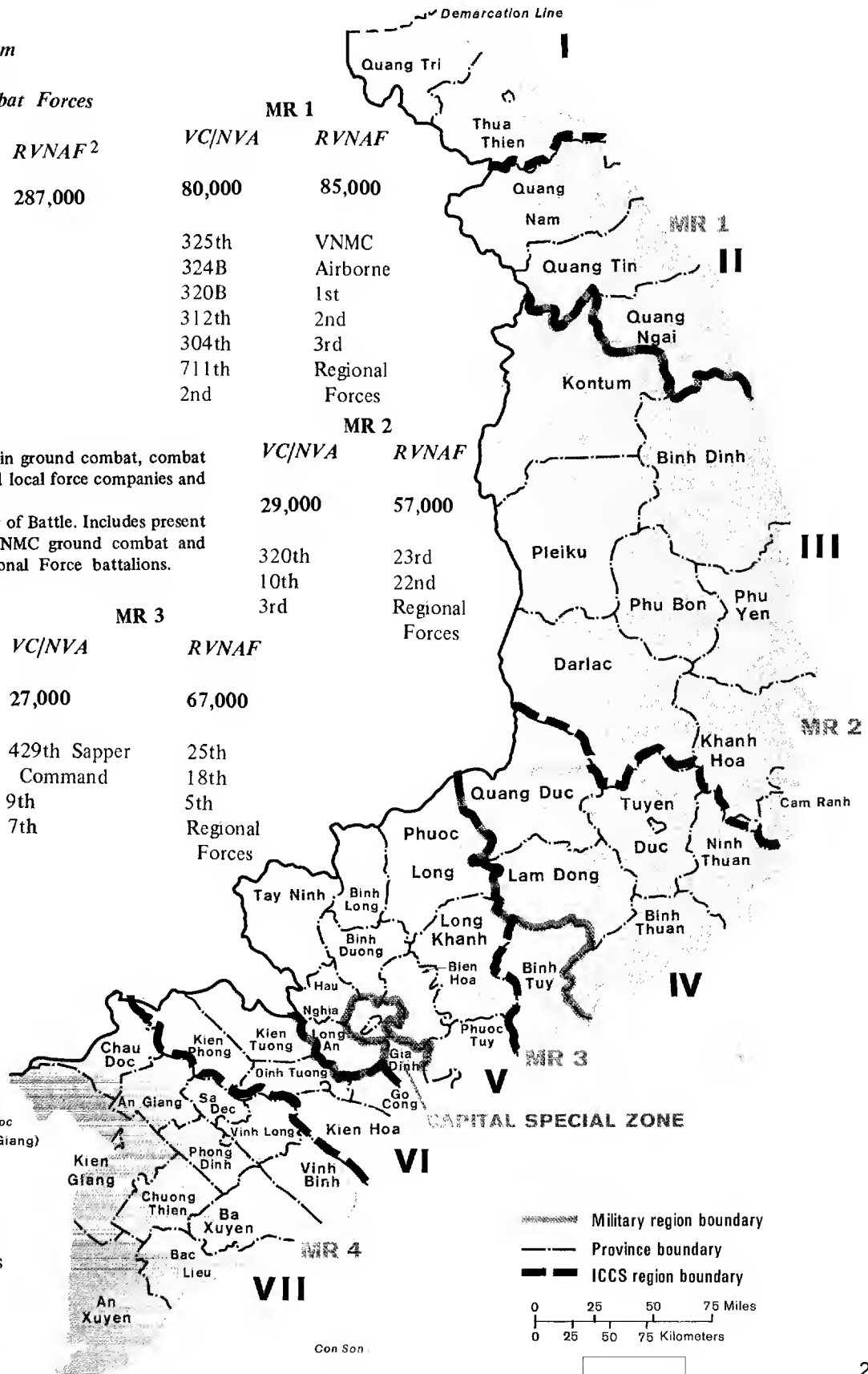
44th Special

Tactical Zone

Regional Forces

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. Revised RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes present for duty personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions.



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17. The 272nd NVA Regiment of the 9th Division has deployed from Binh Long Province in MR 3 and apparently will now operate in the northern Delta. The headquarters of the regiment was located on 1 May in northern Svay Rieng Province, Cambodia, halfway along the traditional route used by NVA forces en route to MR 4 from MR 3. The new evidence corroborates previous reports that the 272nd Regiment was scheduled to redeploy to northern MR 4. Additional collateral reporting indicates that elements of the regiment are already operating in their new area.

18. Other moves by elements of the 9th NVA Division in MR 3 may have been completed or be imminent. On 29 April, the division's headquarters was located in southwestern Binh Long Province some 13 miles southwest of its 8 April location in the An Loc area. During the same period, elements of the 209th NVA Regiment, 7th Division, reported transferring unspecified types of artillery to 9th Division elements in the Binh Long/Binh Duong Province border area. Although this could represent a routine rotation of units, it is possible that the 9th Division is preparing for future deployments.

Unit Redeployments in Laos

19. The 335th NVA Independent Infantry Regiment, currently operating southeast of the Plaine des Jarres in northern Laos, may be preparing to relocate. On 2 May the regiment's headquarters ordered three North Vietnamese soldiers to return to the regiment to "settle accounts" and, on the following day, a report from the regiment's 1st Battalion stated that "all units [were to] move out" to an unspecified location. Although the purpose of the move was not revealed, it is known that the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 335th Regiment are currently in a training status. Although it is likely that the regiment is probably shifting its area of responsibility within northern Laos, the possibility that it may be relocating to North Vietnam for the rainy season, as elements have done in the past, cannot be ruled out.

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